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ABATE of Iowa, Inc.  
1240 Washington St.  
Eldora, IA 50627

DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION  
DOCKETS

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Docket Management  
Room PL-401  
400 Seventh Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Reference: Docket NHTSA 2003-14375 - 20

Ladies and Gentlemen:

This letter provides the official comments of ABATE of Iowa to Docket Number NHTSA 2003-14375, specifically the proposal by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to study "Characteristics of Motorcycle Operators." The above referenced docket number is the one provided in the "Federal Register," April 28, Volume 68, Number 82, with a stated deadline for public comment of 30 June 2003.

This public comment reflects the input of the more than 7800 members of ABATE of Iowa whom think that the taxpayer dollars used to fund this study would be better spent elsewhere, namely as a resource injection for rider education and motorcycle awareness training.

The membership of ABATE of Iowa takes the issue of motorcycle safety very seriously. ABATE of Iowa provides motorcycle rider training at various locations throughout the state of Iowa. Our instructors are Iowa-licensed, Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF) certified, and are all experienced motorcyclists. We are also a proud sponsor of Iowa's quality Motorcycle Rider Education (MRE) program administered by the office of driver services of the department of transportation. In addition, many of our members donate their personal time as volunteers for our "Share the Road" motorcycle awareness program which aims to educate motorists to look for and share the road safely with motorcyclists. ABATE of Iowa has also launched a comprehensive advertising campaign to promote motorcycle awareness, rider education, and motorcycle safety.

It is our sincere belief that if any taxpayer dollars are to be used to fund a study to determine why motorcyclists lose their lives on our nation's roadways, it should be a study as to what is causing these accidents, and what can be done to prevent them from happening. On page seven of the National Agenda for Motorcycle Safety, under the heading "Where we want to be", there are eight critical questions which the NAMS report determined needed to be answered in future research. We point this out because of the fact that NHTSA cited NAMS as a rationale for the proposed interviews of 4000 riders. We fail to see how this cavalier approach to such a serious issue either answers the question asked by the NAMS report, or warrants the expenditure of taxpayer dollars.

ABATE of Iowa is genuinely concerned about the recent increases in motorcycle fatalities. However, we don't consider them as merely statistics. Every fatality represents someone's personal loss. As motorcyclists ourselves, these losses hit very close to home. We have no choice but to request that NHTSA abandon this well intentioned, but impractical research idea, in favor of more realistic solution to the dangers that we face as motorcyclists.

Respectfully yours,



Tim Nelson  
Legislative Assistant  
ABATE of Iowa, Inc.

cc:

The Honorable Jim Nussle, Member of Congress, Iowa's 1<sup>st</sup> District  
The Honorable Jim Leach, Member of Congress, Iowa's 2<sup>nd</sup> District  
The Honorable Leonard Boswell, Member of Congress, Iowa's 3<sup>rd</sup> District  
The Honorable Tom Latham, Member of Congress, Iowa's 4<sup>th</sup> District  
The Honorable Steve King, Member of Congress, Iowa's 5<sup>th</sup> District  
Dr. John Graham, Office of Information & Regulatory Affairs  
Ms. Mary Peters, Administrator, Federal Highway Administration  
Steve Rector, State Coordinator, ABATE of Iowa, Inc.  
Tom Wyld, Vice President of Government Relations, Motorcycle Riders Foundation